

Bricks and Bones: Discovering Atlanta's Forgotten Spaces of Neo-Slavery¹

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A. Gone with the Wind?

Picture this: a raven-haired Scarlett O'Hara, dismayed at the poor returns of her partnership with heart-throb Ashley Wilkes at the sawmill, considers a more efficient way of cutting costs and improving profitability there. She's been told that convict men always work better than free labor ("twice the work of free", so the saying goes), so she will try the new way of securing cheap labor concocted by Georgia's Yankee occupiers. She too will follow the lead of marauding Northern business schemers and rent convicts from the military government. She discusses her plans with Archie, the man who is her constant bodyguard in dangerous, postbellum Atlanta. The invalid, an ex-convict himself, gives it to our heroine straight:

*I knows about convict leasin'. I calls it convict murderin'. Buying men like they was mules. Treatin' them worse than mules was ever treated. Beatin' them, starvin' them, killin' them. And who cares. The State don't care. It's got the lease money. The folks that gits the convicts, they don't care. All they want is to feed them cheap and git all the work they can out of them. Hell, Ma'am, I never thought much of women and I think less of them now.*²

Scarlett is outraged more by her servant's insolence than by the human trafficking that he accuses her of wanting to exploit. Paying no heed to the warning, she quickly moves to secure her new low-cost laborers from the Yankee military governor.³ She hires a new foreman, a Carpetbagger named Johnnie Gallagher ("the Irish know how to work", so she congratulated herself). Gallagher proves to be the boilerplate white foreman from hell, content to starve and beat Scarlett's workers to within

an inch of their lives, just as Archie had predicted. But Gallagher is no mere stereotype. In fact, during the course of my research on convict leasing in Georgia, I have come across a legion of Gallaghers, instructed to apply the whip in all manner of mills, not to mention, mines, tar and turpentine farms, coal and iron mines, coke ovens, railroad crews, and brickyards.⁴ And their track records bear an uncanny resemblance to this fictional bad boy's.

When the sordid realities of the worker shanties at the sawmill finally make their awful impression on our Scarlett, she is left with a fateful decision: whether to lose her foreman as she introduces more humane shop policies in his absence, or to leave him in his post leaving things as they are, thus assuring the continued growth of her finally profitable business. The choice came quickly: Gallagher would stay, the money would continue to flow, and she would just have to avert her eyes.

When Margaret Mitchell wrote her first drafts of the book, it is said that she spent a fair amount of time on the bluff overlooking the confluence of the Chattahoochee River and Peachtree Creek. If so, she wrote on the site of the Creek Indian village called Standing Peachtree, the place that gave birth to modern-day Atlanta and lent the city its most enduring city symbol. Today, we know the book to be a monumental work of American fiction. But it is also larger and stranger than fiction. Pat Conroy sketched the book's enduring aftereffects as he recalled the scene when his mother and he attended a Saturday matinee screening of the film. Mrs. Conroy approached the movie almost reverentially, making the concerted effort to look as much like Vivien Leigh

as possible, so much a cultural icon had this performance become for Southern women of her generation. Conroy went on to say that although *Gone with the Wind* was heralded as a monumental first novel at the time of its release, 1936, there was also something about its immediacy and fine nuance, its vividly journalistic historical fiction, that made the era suddenly come alive, by drilling down through the historical sediment to release a gusher of Southern *Zeitgeist* with disarming accuracy and power.⁵

The book's veracity is attested by Mitchell's description of Scarlett's sawmill. Described as being at the "end of Peachtree", the mill's site can be pinpointed to a place not far from Standing Peachtree just a bit downstream on the Chattahoochee -- Nickajack Creek. Here the Union army documented a sawmill that once stood near their troop locations, and it is not unlikely that Mitchell made Scarlett's this one.⁶ Not fiction at all, Mitchell's settings were very much true to life, as authentically characterized as were the social, political, and economic tribulations endured by her many characters.

And just how far afield can we take Mitchell's narrative?

B. The Brickyard

I next turn my attention toward a brick works on the Chattahoochee, built contemporarily with the sawmills that Mitchell described whirring away across the River. Just as these mills were well positioned to profit (capital P) after Sherman's burning of Atlanta, the antebellum Bolton brick works also found its sweet spot in Reconstruction. In 1878, the old plant was purchased by William B. Lowe, a man who had gotten rich leasing convicts to the likes of Scarlett, and his partner Captain James English, a Civil War hero and local notable. English came to the convict business a bit later than Lowe, 1878, the same year as Chattahoochee Brick's founding, bringing in tow no less than two newly minted Penitentiary Companies. That same year Bolton was expanded and renamed the Chattahoochee Brick Company, and manned with convicts leased by Lowe and English from the State.

This paper is about the brick made there and its manufacture by forced convict labor indentured to private interests by the state of Georgia. It is also about the expanded use of convict labor by a host of

construction-related businesses issuing from Chattahoochee Brick, a virtual conglomerate owned by Captain English and his family alone. It is also about other building materials, other *materialities*, and other times, and the degree to which we, like Scarlett O'Hara, commonly choose to avert our eyes from the often-troubling circumstances of their manufacture.

Over the past two years, my students and I have been absorbed in this site beside the Chattahoochee. The River's banks harbored some of the City's earliest industries: cotton and sawmills, tanneries, clay pits, and brickyards, many of which early took advantage of the River to transport their products to market. Chattahoochee Brick Company quickly became the most productive of Atlanta's brick outfits; at one point in its history, it found itself one of the largest enterprises in the South. Its letterhead boasted its Herculean productivity: 200,000 bricks per day. In the early twentieth century, following a determinative tug of war between the two partners, the company was seized by English exclusively, who, by the time of the takeover had been Atlanta's mayor (1880-82), and headed the Atlanta Police Department (1883-1906). Having won the war with Lowe, English moved to lead the pack of Atlanta's alpha-males, quite the social climb for a Louisiana orphan and rural buggy-maker who had the uncanny good fortune to deliver Grant's proposal of surrender to Robert E. Lee at Appomattox. English family ownership of the company persisted for almost a century.

My class's work began innocently enough. Mostly, we were fascinated by the residue of yesterday's tomorrow here, and the ironic "coolness" of confronting old-time modernity's fantasy of mechanization taking command as it rusted beside the River. The old building carcasses that we found there were mammoth, their entrails sublime. Where did they come from? How and why did they go?

C. What the Cat Drug In

Our archival research began at the Atlanta History Center. There we found some minimal photographic documentation as well as Sanborn maps, company ledgers and correspondence. We also found wanted posters offering reward for the return of escaped convicts dead or alive. Disturbing. Elsewhere we found aerials, plat plans, tax records, census data, GIS, even watershed and wastewater management reports -- you know the litany. But the facts that



Figure 1. Sanborn Map, Atlanta, GA, 1907, V. I, p. 96

we were so busy accumulating were soon overshadowed by a story told by Harold Smith, the octogenarian curator at the nearby Smyrna Visitors Center and Museum: the fact that Chattahoochee Brick, in its earliest days, used convict labor to fuel production. This claim of Harold's was subsequently confirmed by former plant workers who, when inter-

viewed, elaborated on the story.⁷ It seems that the factory was founded coincident with the so-called Penitentiary Companies of Georgia, for-profit corporations to whom the city, county, and state would indenture its convicts as a means of working off fines and court costs. The companies to whom these convicts were leased could (and did) also sublease these folks to other companies in need of added man- and womanpower, and turn a profit to boot. And, as fate would have it, the major investor and profiteer in Penitentiary Companies No. 2 and 3 was none other than Captain English, then a partner with Lowe in Chattahoochee Brick.

Evidence of the terrible labor practice at CBC today is scant. However, we did unearth first evidences of Mr. Smith's claim in Atlanta Sanborn maps dated 1907 and 1909, the first of which indicated the location of three parallel "tenements" at CBC, so they were harmlessly called.⁸ (Ill. 1) As we came to understand, two of these were for black convicts, and the third, the smallest of the three, was for whites. Another "tenement" was also outlined, a forecast of the buildup of convict labor preceding the company's ramped up production of brick as the inevitable end of neo-slavery became apparent to all. By the year 1909 the buildings had been eradicated from the map thanks to the convenient Sanborn paste-ins regularly used to update the insurance record. Further evidence arrived in the cache of brickyard working drawings that my students and I salvaged from the Plant Superintendent's office as the complex was being demolished only months



Figure 2. Walled Garden and "Temporary Cemetery" at Chattahoochee Brick Company. Site dates to the 1960s. Photo taken October 2010 by Domenic Spencer.

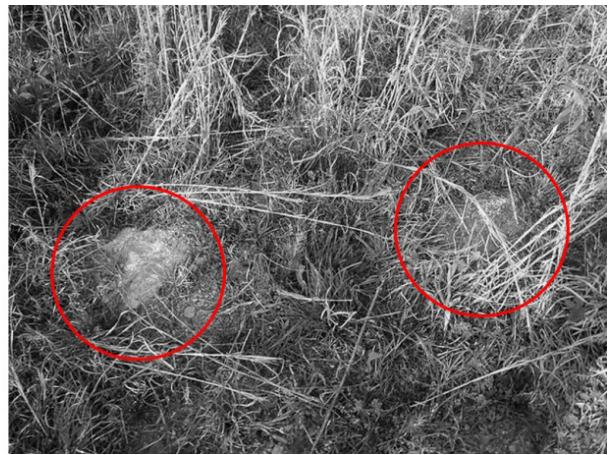


Figure 3. Headstones from the Plant's original cemetery, dating from the 1880s. Photo taken April 2011 by Riverside Kate.

ago. There, amid the hundreds of records that the current owner abandoned on the floor, was a site plan that called out a "Temporary Cemetery" beside what had been the 1952 Sales Office, expanded in 1960, a spot still occupied by a most suspicious-looking walled garden.⁹

Uncanny. According to our documentation, the cemetery rears its head at approximately the same time that a drawing from the Southern Railroad notes an expanded right of way onto CBC property and the "old cemetery" it will displace. According to the drawing, the placement of this first cemetery occupied a space immediately behind the old convict barracks. Could the "temporary cemetery" next to the plant's sales office be a holding area for remains unearthed by the railroad company? Just as the walled cemetery is marked by ranks of shallow indentations around the perimeter, what remains of the original cemetery is marked by improvised rock headstones, a feature that can still be easily observed today in poor rural cemeteries, particularly those confined to Black sections in white-owned cemeteries, Black churchyards, and Black family plots.

If CBC used convict labor, what then became of the inmates? It is safe to assume that at least a number of convicts did work off their fines or received pardons and returned to freedom, for a time at least. But it is also clear that others died on the site and were interred there. We were fortunate to discover the case of at least one former prisoner, Avery Bates, a white man of substantial background accused of burning down a relative's barn, who escaped from the Chattahoochee Brick camp in 1884. With the help of his family, he resettled on a family farm in western Tennessee and laid low with his kinfolk for 3 years. And then one day, while hoeing a field, the unarmed Bates was hunted down and shot at point blank range by an infamous bounty hunter from Chattanooga engaged by Captain English. Newspaper accounts indicate that Bates' body was returned to the brickyard, identified by Captain English himself, and buried there.¹⁰ Captain English, by the way, persistently claimed to know nothing of convict maltreatment at CBC, saying that others ran the company in his absence. He may not have actively managed Chattahoochee Brick, but his two sons James, Jr. and Harry did. CBC lore, that is, the oral history of the oldest surviving workers of the factory, contends that prisoner abuse occurred and persisted there in full knowledge of the owners, and that mur-

dered convicts were buried there. There are also allegations that corpses were sometimes burned in the company's scove kilns, to be replaced by Morrison, then beehive kilns built on the old foundations.¹¹ Should this be so, the possibility exists that all bricks produced during the era of convict leasing bear traces, however small, of human remains infusing a faint taint of death into a great many of Atlanta's postbellum brick buildings, streets, and yes, even portions of its water and sanitary systems. Any subsequent human remains must have been dumped along with the other furnace waste in still-extant ash piles off-site. It also came as no surprise to learn that a number of the old black workers interviewed at what had until 1972 been CBC stated that they would not remain on the premises after sundown, insisting that the place was haunted.¹²

CBC's unspoken disposal of the dead was likely undertaken so as to escape the notice of state-appointed Prison Physicians who, apart from treating sick and injured prisoners, were also on the lookout for signs of convict maltreatment. CBC also had devised how to hide any discrepancies in prison count that came to light. And transcribed court testimonies report James English Jr. testifying that they were commonly given more convicts than they contracted for, making dead reckoning near impossible.¹³

D. Chattahoochee Ultra

Chattahoochee Bricks abound in Atlanta. They were employed widely to rebuild a new, fireproof City following the burning attending Sherman's march. I have found Chattahoochee bricks (you can tell them – they are always incised on the end with the number 1) from one side of the greater City to the other. From the flower beds of Jimmy Carter's aunt in Roswell on the west, to the Exposition Mills in the city center, to the Pullman Plant in Kirkwood on the east.¹⁴ The City's appetite for Chattahoochee Brick was rapacious, thanks particularly to the planning ingenuity of Captain English, soon to be Mayor English, who, in the name of social hygiene and good grooming, mandated that all city streets were henceforth to be paved. In a parallel act of civic boosterism, Mayor English also commandeered for Atlanta the International Cotton Exposition of 1881, the fair centering on a utopian, cruciform Exposition Hall (soon to be turned into the City's largest cotton mill). The Exposition was living testament to the fact that the South was indeed rising again. A new industrial zone

along the railroad tracks was also part of the show; it soon included stockyards, slaughterhouses, trolley barns, lumber yards, cotton gin and plow works, and even another brick factory, Palmer Brick, owned, coincidentally, by the Mayor himself. Virtually everything in this new industrial zone was built of brick. The emphasis was placed upon attracting Northern investment to Atlanta by demonstrating the virtually unlimited potential for economic development and capital growth in the New South. The Exposition also showcased the connectedness of the City to Northern markets thanks to the City's state-of-the-art railroad network now fully integrated into other railway networks thanks to the state-built Western and Atlantic Railway. With new industries in place thanks to the Exposition, Captain English and his Chattahoochee Development Company, also built frame dwellings for the influx of new rural labor that the fair industries brought in tow. Thus he added to Atlanta two large working-class neighborhoods beside the nexus of nearby Western and Atlantic and Central of Georgia railroad tracks. The first neighborhood was Vine City, built by the Mayor's eldest son James, Jr.; the second, English Avenue, rode astride the Fair's southern flank, dedicated by the son to his legendary father. The year after English stepped down as Mayor, he was named Commissioner of Police thus guaranteeing to continue his assault on crime (the Captain, it is said, cleaned up Atlanta's streets) and, *sotto voce*, guaranteeing an unlimited supply of convicts to stoke the kilns at Chattahoochee Brick and its counterparts. In short, the new Police Commissioner reassured Atlanta's industrial elite of reliable access to virtually no-cost labor for a host of other labor-intensive enterprises like his. Seldom have the stories of architecture, economy, politics and social justice been so deeply imbricated as in the many, convergent business interests of Captain English, Chattahoochee Brick being just the starting point.

E. Eureka!

From this research, my students and I came to some stark realizations. Most important: Emptiness is not necessarily absence. Any urban site, particularly one with a history as long as this one's, is likely to exhume a compelling narrative provided one has the patience to tease it out and learn from it. And this history may take the student far afield of "architecture" in the narrow sense of the word. What's more, this case study directly posed to us this rhetorical question: Can it ever be business as

usual once such stories have been unearthed? Or is it still, as it has been for so many in Atlanta, that history is bunk, and that burial places are to be considered little more than inconvenient nuisances, to be disposed of as inconspicuously as possible? I illustrate the predicament by two cases dating from the era of our once-touted Interstate system: the first, a cemetery partially buried by I-75, engulfed by its roadway embankment, the second, the uncovering and subsequent re-interring under the new I-20 roadbed of the long-forgotten DeKalb County Prison graveyard containing some fifty bodies.

My students also arrived at the hard-to-swallow conclusion that architecture is, at its most basic, a commodity constituted of commodities, like bricks. Yet seldom if ever is the curiosity or determination needed to look into these secondary commodities seriously marshaled. To wit: We found James English, Jr. during the notorious Penitentiary Commission Hearings of August 1908, saying that the Penitentiary Companies (like the two owned by his father) did not deal in people, but in contracts, much like bricks.¹⁵ And with this bone-chilling piece of testimony comes first-hand admission of the dehumanization, commodification, and monetization done to imprisoned men and women under the convict leasing system. We were also made to see the effects of human labor in brick *manu-facture*, that is to say, brick fabrication by hand. Workers may have been ordered to produce uniform, standardized product, but that hardly suggests that their lives or practices were anywhere so orderly as their handiwork, *pace* Le Corbusier. Distressing and distress went hand-in-hand. Bricks made in these places at this time still show their original dents, impressions, scars, abrasions, and, yes, even fingerprints. These are not the progeny of today's brickyard, totally mechanized and coddled by robotic arms, their smile lines artificially applied in paint. Rather, these early violet Atlanta firings are remarkable in their standard hallmarks as well as the many peculiarities, non-conformities, imperfections, and physical deprivations they bear still. Each bespeaks, I think, the workings of invisible hands that modeled, carried, stacked, and 'trotted'¹⁶ them, usually under duress, a century and more ago. In fact, on a bad day, flaws like these might reduce such irregular brick to the status of discards called "brickbats", in other words, a cause to punish, the typical response to any waste at a brick plant.¹⁷



GEORGIA NIGGER

Figure 4. Man tied to pick. Photograph taken by John L. Spivak during research for his 1932 book, *Georgia Nigger*. Cited by Douglas Blackmon, *Slavery by Another Name: The Reenslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II*, 2009

Dents like these might have occasioned a worker's brutal punishment at the hands of a factory's supervisor, as he was whipped with leather straps, wrapped and chained around a pick, subjected to water torture (yes, these places did in fact invent our prison torture *du jour*), or deprived of water in hot-box solitary confinement in full summer sun. Flaws in the brick might well have exacted a punishment necessitating a camp doctor's immediate care, though any injury would only be aggravated by his primitive, even sadistic medical methods. A favorite treatment for what ails you was amputation, a virtual death sentence in this pre-antibiotic world. Finally, as Avery Bates' story reminds us, woe to those who tried to escape and failed; their fate was sealed. Is it any wonder that there were cemeteries at Chattahoochee Brick?

F. The Begats

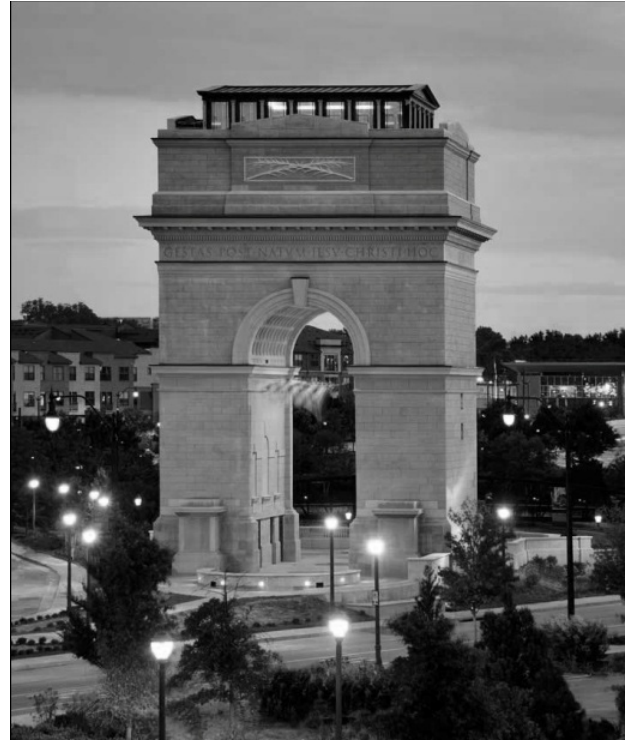


Figure 5. The Millenium Gate, designer Rodney Mims Cook. Atlantic Station, Atlanta, GA. Dedicated 2008.

Captain English's entrepreneurial acumen during the late nineteenth century has become the stuff of legend. In fact, English, along with a bevy of equally suspect captains of Atlanta industry, has just been memorialized by the City's new Millennium Arch, the Prince of Wales-y neoclassical centerpiece of the "new urbanism" at the city's Atlantic Station. This mixed-use complex takes its name from Atlantic Steel Works upon whose site today's cross-programmed complex was built. It is a place whose steel and paper operations once demanded large numbers of convicts both on- and off-site; it was owned by the aptly named Hurt Brothers. Truth be known, the Hurt brothers had a major bone to pick with Captain English: They accused him of marking up the price of his convicts, unwilling to sublease them to his competitors without turning a profit, an outright violation of Prison Commission by-laws¹⁸

Chattahoochee Brick spawned a bloodline of attendant businesses. Coal mines stoked the early Morrison kilns, a branch of the Central Railway was built

by English to move the wood and coal from his mills and mines on the Georgia-Tennessee line to the brick factory and then to deliver brick to the seaport of Columbus, GA, where Chattahoochee Brick ballast travelled throughout the Caribbean and beyond.¹⁹ (In its heyday, Chattahoochee Brick claimed that more than half of the company's revenues came from abroad.) The Captain's sawmills provided the crossties for the new railway segment. His Durham Coal and Coke Works supplied high heat coke to places like pig-iron forges and steel mills, which produced the rails that he needed to expand the company's reach. By the way, the whole of this section of rail was built using convict labor, and English proudly recounts how the workforce was driven to complete it on schedule and on budget so that he could win a bet. And then there was the Chattahoochee Development Corporation that owned as much land in west Fulton County as the early City encompassed at its outset. A small portion of that property was exploited for the clay varieties it yielded, and some for the wood used by English's sawmills and turpentine works. But most of English's land was slated for new building development inexorably moving the City westward into the County. Chattahoochee Development Company was responsible for new construction on English property from Buckhead and Druid Hills on the more rural edges of town to the north to the modest company towns mentioned above, adjacent to the city center. And these new company towns came to be connected to the River thanks to the area's growing interurban railway system.²⁰

What's more, this vast industrial apparatus was soon to be underwritten by English's investment bank, the English American Bank and Trust, later reincorporated as the Fourth National Bank. After swallowing up a host of its competitors, Fourth became First National Bank. And then First was taken over by Nations Bank, later by Wachovia, and most recently, in 2009, by Wells Fargo. English descendants have served on the Boards of Directors of all successive incarnations of English American Trust. What then comes into focus is that Chattahoochee Brick bears responsibility for far more than buildings in Atlanta. Indeed, it ramifies into some of the nation's largest financial institutions, a list that today includes American Express and Equifax.

In June 2005, Wachovia issued a public apology for having profited from a number of antebellum banks (e.g. the Bank of Charleston) that had un-

derwritten so many labor-intensive, slave-demanding southern enterprises. And with this public *mea culpa*, the Bank thought itself expiated of the blood money earned from slavery before the Civil War.²¹ But what Wachovia, or Wells Fargo, has yet to acknowledge is the fact that its constituent banks continued to underwrite a perhaps even more sinister version of that system by financing businesses whose profitability was incumbent on forced labor, or as Douglas Blackmon calls it: "Slavery by Another Name".²² In fact, some of these businesses continue to operate and profit to this very day. Of these, a fair number have at one time or other reverted to various 'informal' means of peonage to maintain their production levels.²³ Convict labor was officially outlawed in Georgia in 1909. But as books like the 1932 best sellers *Georgia Nigger* and *I Was a Fugitive from a Georgia Chain Gang* so vividly attest, such bondage remained ensconced as standard penal practice well into the 1940s, if not beyond.²⁴ In fact, just beyond the Chattahoochee River as late as 1928, fully half of Alabama's state revenues derived from convict leasing.

G. Scratching the Surface

Which brings me to a final point. Some time ago, a colleague of mine at Iowa State University bought an innocent-looking package of Christmas (she calls them Winter Solstice) tree lights. As their green wire was slowly unwound from its cardboard backing, a postcard from the edge gradually came to light. "*Crouching Lion*" sent out an alarm: "*Everyday Drudgery*." I presume that the note was written on the sly, a message in a bottle sent abroad by some faceless factory worker seeking someone, anyone out there, who might be interested enough to learn how he or she makes our Christmases sparkle. I spend a lot more time these days looking at labels. For instance, I find it difficult to wander the aisles of Home Depot's Atlanta flagship store 121, only to find so much of its construction material stamped with such points of origin as China, Ecuador, Brazil, Philippines. Its power tools marked with China, Korea, Mexico. Its backhoes and mini-dozers arriving from Germany, China, Korea. Its lighting is almost entirely "Made in China" but for the models made in the UAE. Are these Developing World places our century's version of postbellum Georgia? As I note these exotic locales, exotic for me at least, I also find it difficult not to wonder about the working conditions requisite to bring these materials to market, in

other words, to this store. As I look at the piles of plywood, particle board, granite countertops, paneling, plasterboard, tile, laminate, banisters, power drills, and chandeliers in HD121, questions arise as to whether our latter-day attention to and adulation of *Materiality* have blinded us to certain less savory facts of material facture. In our quest for innovation (or is it novelty?), in our pursuit of the latest building shimmer or transparency, might we not find ourselves too distracted or dismissive to attend to the almost invisible accounts that such materials might tell, buried as they are in the corrugation holding the glitter. I wonder too if these stories will go untold and be irretrievably lost if we do not summon up the curiosity, temerity, and conscience to crack open the paper-thin veneer.

ENDNOTES

1 I would like to dedicate this paper to my brother-in-law Michael P. Keeley, an ardent lover of history. Mike was a big red headed guy with the bluest, blue eyes. They overflowed with the kind of good humor that would find in this story's opening paragraphs something to chuckle over, even though the greater topic is a seriously solemn one. But then, it's not like the Irish to succumb to tragedy, a fact no better borne out than by the progress of Scarlett O'Hara herself. Sadly, I never got to discuss the final product with him; he died the day the paper was completed.

2 Margaret Mitchell, *Gone with the Wind*, original publication date 1936 (New York: Pocket Book Edition, 2008), pp. 1051-2.

3 Depending on when these events transpire in the book – and enough time had to pass to allow for the acquisition of the business, the hiring of two crews of workers, the consequent business difficulties, and the new foreman -- I suggest that the date of this confrontation might have been as late as 1868. Had it been so, Scarlett would have secured her convicts from George Lowe, the main investor in Penitentiary Company 1 founded that year. Lowe was Captain James English's business partner. If earlier, Scarlett would have leased the convicts directly from the occupational government. In fact, it was the Northern administration of Georgia that invented the practice of convict leasing.

4 Georgia House of Representatives, Special Committees, *Joint Committee of the Senate and House to Investigate the Convict Lease System of Georgia*, 20 July to 20 August 1908, Georgia Department of Archives and History.

5 Pat Conroy, "Preface" to Mitchell, p. xvii.

6 Esteemed Atlanta historian Marion Bledsoe has kindly provided me a Civil War survey marking the position of the 15th, 16th, and 17th Artillery Corps of Sherman's army, evening 5 July 1864. This map identifies all major landmarks, sawmill included, in the vicinity of Nickajack Creek. Bledsoe argues that one of the sawmills along the Creek was the likely model for Scarlett's.

7 Without the research uncovered by genealogist Dennis Stewart, a copy of which is stored at the Atlanta

History Center, I would have been unable to undertake this work. I found his research on relative Avery Bates, an escaped convict who had been shot by a bounty hunter, in the Center's subject files on Chattahoochee Brick.

8 I owe this discovery to my thesis advisee, Daniel Scott, who assisted me in my research on the story at Chattahoochee Brick. Daniel graduated Southern Polytechnic State University in 2010 with a thesis on the reclamation of Chattahoochee Brick Company.

9 The building was designed by the architecture firm headed by Philip Trammell Shutze -- *Schutze and Armistead* -- in 1952. The company office was expanded in 1960 by the same firm. A construction document dating from 1963, discovered among the remains of the plant Supervisor's office drawing files, indicated a "Temporary Cemetery" beside the recently enlarged building. The project architect, Charles Armistead, now in his 90s, confided during an interview with me that had a cemetery next to the original building been discovered during either phase of construction, "he thinks that he would have remembered it."

10 "The Killing of Bates: A Correspondent Sends Some Inside Facts", *Chattanooga (TN) Times*, 18 April 1887, p. 5.

11 Refer to my StoryCorps interview with Bates' relative Dennis Stewart, Bates' granddaughter, Dot Bates Roper and Bates' great-grandson Brian Roper, digitally recorded at WABE Atlanta on 3 April 2011. The interview is available though the StoryCorps website and the Library of Congress.

12 Chattahoochee Brick Company was finally sold to the General Shale Company in 1972 and continues to hold it today, despite its attempts to sell the now empty property

13 *Joint Committee of the Senate and House to Investigate the Convict Lease System of Georgia*, p. 1228.

14 More buildings built of Chattahoochee brick include the 'high-tech' 1881 Cotton Exposition industrial buildings, including the still extant Van Winkle Gin and the King Plow Works, and meatpacking plants, all beside the Inman rail yards near the Atlanta Fair site. On the east side of the City, I have also noted that the bricks of the huge 1925 Girls' School in Grant Park was marked with number 1, as are many of the once-toney neighborhood's grand houses. Chattahoochee brick can also be found in the nineteenth century walls encircling Oakland Cemetery in Atlanta, Captain English's final resting place and that of many of his fellow business leaders. I have also found Chattahoochee bricks as far afield as Lawrenceville, GA, in the Gwinnett County Courthouse as well as the brick buildings that surround the town square.

15 Derivatives, anyone? *Joint Committee of the Senate and House to Investigate the Convict Lease System of Georgia*, p. 1223.

16 *Trotting* refers to the slow run that convicts were forced to maintain in order to handle the requisite 'brick a second', as tasked by the management of Chattahoochee Brick. 3 convict crews of 6 were required to handle 200,000 bricks a day, and if they failed to do so, they did not make 'task.' This sad eventuality could result in punishment for the "insubordination" "loafing", or "refusing to work", whipping typically 8-10 'licks.'

17 The industry terms a defective brick a *brickbat*. Today's successor to Chattahoochee Brick, General Shale, contends that its new Rome plant loses only about 1 percent of its brick production. Richard Bickerstaff, the Dean of Georgia brickmakers and owner of Bickerstaff Brick and Tile Company in Columbus, Georgia, argues that his plants typically lost 4%. He also disputes General Shale's claim. It was not uncommon that plants with an inexperienced work force would lose as much as 20% of their brick production. Today, the Chattahoochee Brick Plant site still remains littered with mounds of ancient brickbats.

18 *Joint Committee of the Senate and House to Investigate the Convict Lease System of Georgia*, p. 1234-6.

19 This railroad was first called the Crawfish Springs Railway, then the Chickamauga and Durham line. It later expanded into the Chattanooga and Gulf Railway company, moving southward to Chattahoochee Brick at Bolton, GA, and then on to Columbus, GA. The company overseeing its construction was the Crawfish Springs Land Company, owned by one of English's partners at Chattahoochee Brick, George Parrott, who also invested in the state's First Penitentiary Company. The Chattanooga and Gulf Railway was built with convict labor. *Poor's Directory of Railway Officials* (New York: Poor's Railway Manual, 1887) p. 448.

20 English Avenue and Vine City were connected to Chattahoochee Brick and to another of English's enterprises, Whittier Mill, via the Atlanta and Bolton, or River Trolley. The line originated near the Georgia Light and Electric Railway headquarters adjacent to Vine City. It was first formed in 1889 and called the Collins Park and Belt Railroad. Near downtown, its track came to demarcate the growing racial division between the increasingly black Vine City and the white English Avenue, exacerbated by the Great Atlanta Fire of 1917, which devastated the historically Black Fourth Ward. This area also saw some of the City's worst race rioting during the Civil Rights era of the 1960s. Whittier Mill, Chattahoochee Brick and a Georgia Electric power plant located on Proctor Creek were easily reached from the River Trolley. Whittier Mill was built as the southern arm of the cotton mill company of that name headquartered in Worcester, MA. It too was built of Chattahoochee brick by English's brickyard convicts; Captain English received company stock in payment for Chattahoochee Land and Development Company's construction of Whittier Mill.

21 Katie Benner, "Wachovia Apologizes for Slavery Ties", *CNN Money*, 2 June 2005 (online edition). According to Benner, the Bank of Charleston that Wachovia had acquired via merger, owned at least 700 slaves, and they commonly seized slaves put up as collateral when a slaveowner-debtor fell into arrears.

22 I am indebted to Douglas Blackmon's parallel research on Captain English's trafficking in convicts in Atlanta. His work has confirmed a number of the conclusions reached by my students and me regarding Chattahoochee Brick, and connected it into a far-larger web of exploitation among postbellum Atlanta's wealthy entrepreneurial class. See Douglas Blackmon, *Slavery by Another Name: The Reenslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II*, (New York: Anchor Books, 2009), pp. 343-7. Incidentally, Blackmon's

Pulitzer-prize winning book is being turned into a documentary on the topic of convict labor for PBS. As part of their filming, Blackmon's team interviewed my Fall 2010 fourth year studio class at Southern Polytechnic State University, and filmed the discussion on 2 April 2011.

23 Convict leasing ended in 1908 only to be followed by the chain gang era of 1909-1955 (in Georgia), wherein convicts, both misdemeanor and felon, were used by the state as hard labor on "public works", road and sewer construction particularly. Fulton County was marked by any number of them, including West, East, Utoy, Sandy Springs, Roseland, and River/DeFoor's Ferry, the last of which remains still. An alternative to serving time on the county chain gang, a convicted man might willingly contract himself to a landowner willing to pay off his fines and court costs, thus indenturing himself indefinitely. Chain gangs of all stripes commonly installed water and sewer systems, which, in Atlanta, included the main water trunk line that followed Chattahoochee Avenue to the city's two new Hemphill Reservoirs, built circa World War I by chain gangs. They also served the interests of the Georgia "Good Roads Movement"; the main Bellwood and River Camps were responsible for paving miles of roads in west Atlanta and Buckhead, including 2 of Atlanta's most exclusive, West Andrews and West Chatham Roads. See Alex Lichtenstein, *Twice the Work of Free Labor: The Political Economy of Convict Labor in the New South* (New York: Verso, 1996), Chapter 7 "Bad Boys Make Good Roads", esp. pp. 160-6. See also Atlanta History Center, Microfilm: Fulton County -- Early Prison Records -- Director's General Subject File -- Bellwood Correctional Center. Alabama, the last state to rescind convict leasing in 1928, resumed the use of chain gangs for public works in 1995. Mississippi, one of the country's most abusive prison systems, also makes use of chain gangs.

24 Complete references for these books: Robert E. Burns, *I Am a Fugitive from a Georgia Chain Gang!*, 1932. Rpt. Athens, GA: U.GA Press, 1997; John L. Spivak, *Georgia Nigger*, 1932. Rpt. Montclair, NJ: Patterson Smith, 1969.